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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to: (1) compare mothers and daughters on their needs for achievement and affiliation and their attitudes to success and failure; and (2) relate the mother's child-raising practices to the daughter's needs. Questionnaires were filled out by mothers and children, and observations of mother-child interaction were made. Ss were 21 fifth-grade girls and their mothers. Ss were tested for need for achievement, need for affiliation, fear of success, and fear of failure. Results seem to indicate that if girls are influenced by their mothers' needs at all, it is toward being unlike their mothers in terms of motivational patterns. The only exception is fear of success, where daughters seem to hold attitudes similar to their mother's. All the subscales derived from the mothers' reports of their child-raising practices, from the girls' reports of their interactions with their mothers, and from the E's observations of the mother's behavior toward the child were entered in a stepwise multiple regression equation to predict need for achievement, fear of failure, and need for affiliation. A strong tendency emerged for girls who are high on need for achievement to also be high on need for affiliation. Their mothers made demands for independent behavior early and are now allowing their daughters independence. (KM)

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LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER?

A study of the socialization of need for achievement in girls

Anne E. Berens

Paper delivered at an independent symposium On Women, By Women during the Canadian Psychological Association Convention, Montreal, Quebec, June 21, 1972.

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LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER?[1]

A study of the socialization of need for achievement in girls

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An old saying goes "like father, like son." Can we say the same of mother and daughter? This study compared mother and daughter in the important area of motivation on need for achievement (n Ach) need for affiliation (n Aff) fear of failure and fear of success. It then looked at the socialization practices of the mother in an attempt to find the factors that lead to high or low levels of these different needs in their daughters.

The theory of achievement motivation has been developed mainly in relation to men. The various studies that have been done with women have generally produced results that were inconsistent both with each other and with the results found with men. There is little information on achievement training for girls as most studies of socialization practices relevant to n Ach have used boys and their parents. For instance, Winterbottom (1958) studying the socialization of n Ach in boys, found that mothers of boys with high n Ach expected independent accomplishment and self reliant mastery behaviour at earlier ages than did mothers of sons with low n Ach. They also placed fewer restrictions on their sons. Because n Ach is considered to be a stable personality trait acquired early in life, research on the socialization

antecedents of n Ach with girls might help to explain the extreme variability of findings with adult women.

The purposes of this study were (1) to compare mothers and daughters on their needs for achievement and affiliation and their attitudes to success and failure (2) to relate the mother's child-raising practices to the daughter's needs. In contrast to previous studies which have used either questionnaires to be filled out by the mother or observations of mother-child interaction, both will be used in this study. In addition a questionnaire on types of mother-child interaction will be given to the child. This multi-method approach is expected to give a comprehensive picture of socialization pressure on girls in the area of achievement and affiliation.

Method

The Ss were 21 girls and their mothers. They were randomly selected from all fifth-grade girls in a public elementary school in a stable working-class area. Both mothers and children were given the standard TAT measure which was scored for n Ach and n Aff. An additional TAT cue was presented which was scored for fear of success. Children were given the Mandler Sarason Test Anxiety Scale for children (TASC) as a measure of fear of failure and mothers were given the Endler Anxiety Scale. Mothers and children were each given questionnaires to measure their different views of the socialization practices and interactions between them. The child-raising practices questionnaire given to mothers was derived from Winterbottom (1958) and Feld (1967.)

The questionnaire given to children centered on patterns of interaction and control between mothers and children (Danziger, 1971). Two levels of n Ach, labeled high and low, were determined by rank ordering of all Ss on n Ach scores derived from the TAT projective measure. The group was then divided at the median. Those above the median were considered in the high n Ach group and those below, in the low n Ach group.

Results and Discussion

The first comparison involved correlating mother's n Ach, fear of failure and n Aff with their daughter's needs. These results are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Correlation of Mother's and Daughter's Needs

	Girls n Ach	fear of failure	N Aff
Mother's n Ach	-.372#	-.097	-.105
Mother's fear of failure	-.102	.239	-.281
Mother's n Aff	.074	.140	-.047

p .10

Only n Ach approaches significance and the correlation is negative suggesting that mothers and daughters are not alike. This suggestion is backed up by the direction of the other correlations: 6 of the 9 correlations are negative. The final mother-daughter comparison was of presence or absence of fear of success. Of the 5 girls who showed fear of success, 4 of their mothers also showed it. However 5 mothers showed fear of success whose daughters did not show it. Few girls, it seems, develop fear

of success if the motive is not present in their mothers, although not all mothers transmit the motive to their daughters. As a summary comparison the mother's need scores were entered into a stepwise multiple regression equation to predict the daughter's needs but no significant relationship was found.

In general it seems that if girls are influenced by their mothers needs at all it is toward being unlike their mothers in terms of their motivational patterns. The only exception is fear of success where daughters do seem to hold attitudes similar to their mother's. It would be interesting to study older girls to see if more of those girls whose mothers fear success learn this attitude from them or whether they become more unlike on this dimension also.

The next step was to look at the mother's reported child raising practices to see if the daughter's needs could be predicted from these. The mother's child raising practices questionnaire was divided into 8 subscales, four of the subscales were based on the age at which demands for certain behaviours were made, and four were based on the degree of encouragement given for performing the behaviours. The 4 categories of behaviour were caretaking, restrictions, independence, and achievement. An example item from the independence subscale for age expectations was "By what age do you expect your daughter to have interests and hobbies of her own", while on the encouragement subscale this item was "How strongly do you encourage your daughter to have interests and hobbies of her own". An item from the achievement

subscale was "By what age or how strongly do you encourage your daughter to do well in school on her own." From the mother's reports of her child raising practices it was possible to predict n Ach significantly but not to predict fear of failure or n Aff. A stepwise multiple regression program was used and four variables contributed significantly. As these variables relate to high n Ach they were: (1) early age of demands for independence (2) low encouragement of independence (3) high encouragement of achievement and (4) high encouragement of restrictions ($F = 4.389$, df 4/16, $p < .025$ ($R^2 = .5232$) By means of the regression equation over 50% of the variance in girls' n Ach can be accounted for from the mother's reports of their child raising practices. The results further indicate that low n Ach in girls is related to late demands for independence with relatively high encouragement of those demands. Low n Ach was also related to low encouragement of achievement and restrictions. The demands on high n Ach girls for independent behaviour at younger ages corresponds with the demands Winterbottom (1958) found being made on high n Ach boys. These results will be discussed again in relation to the results of the other scales.

The children's questionnaire, which was directed at patterns of interaction and control between mother and child (Danziger, 1971), had three subscales: (1) positive interaction with items such as "Mother plays games with me" to which the children responded "always", "often", "sometimes", or "never", (2) positive control, with items such as "Mother wants me to do better than other children at school" and (3) negative control and negative interaction,

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"Mother tells me how far I can go from home when I go out."

These 3 variables were also entered into a stepwise multiple regression equation to predict the needs of the girls. Positive interaction and positive control contributed somewhat to predicting the needs of the girls accounting for 27% of the variance of the girls' n Ach ($F = 3.401$, df 2/18, p .07) with a tendency for greater positive interaction coupled with achievement oriented standards to contribute to higher levels of n Ach. However this equation did not reach the commonly accepted 5% level of significance.

A third estimate of the mother's behaviour toward her daughter was made by the E during an experimental session in which mother and daughter worked together on anagrams. The mother's physical and verbal behaviour, rated seperately, were coded into 3 types of interaction, (a) showing interest but not actively entering into the task, (b) helping by giving the child hints or suggestions, (c) taking over by giving the child complete answers or physically moving the anagrams letters into place. These 6 subscales were also placed in a stepwise multiple regression equation. With these scales alone it was not possible to predict n Ach, fear of failure (TASC), or n Aff significantly, although predictions to n Ach and n Aff were borderline and were able to account for approximately 20% of the variance.

Having collected multiple measures the final step was to put it all together to see how well the daughter's needs could be predicted. Thus all of the subscales derived from the mother's reports of her child-raising practices, from the girl's reports of their interactions with their mothers, and from the E's observations of the mother's

behaviour in relation to the child were entered together in a stepwise multiple regression equation to predict n Ach, fear of failure (TASC), and n Aff. It was possible to predict a significant amount of the variance of both n Ach and n Aff but not fear of failure. The equation predicting n Ach will be examined first, then the equation predicting n Aff.

Seven variables entered the equation for predicting n Ach, or in other words there were 7 sources of information which significantly contributed to making a "best guess" as to whether the girl's n Ach would be high or low. From the mother's child raising practices questionnaire, knowledge of the age at which independence demands were made and of the degree of encouragement of achievement behaviour, independence, and restrictions contributed significantly to prediction of the child's n Ach, as did the children's report of the amount of positive control exerted by their mothers, and the E's observations of the amount of physical and verbal helping the mother gave her daughter in the experimental situation.

With this equation it was possible to predict 76% of the variance in girls' n Ach scores ($F = 5.966$, $p < .01$, df 7/13). The picture of the mother of a high n Ach daughter which can be developed from this equation is one of a mother still actively involved with her daughter but not actually taking over. She had made demands on her daughter for independent behaviour fairly early but is no longer pushing this. In fact at age 10, she is giving her daughter the independence to be independent. However, both mother and daughter report that the mother is still making demands for achievement behaviour and still willing to offer help and support. It seems that independence is necessary for

girls to develop achievement motivation because without it they would be unable to interpret success or failure as the result of their own behaviour, and this would deprive them of the opportunity of competing with a standard of excellence, the basic definition of an achievement situation.

Turning to n Aff, 5 variables entered the equation. Those from the E's observations contributing were verbal helping and verbally showing interest or eliciting responses, and from the mother's child-raising practices questionnaire those contributing were encouragement of restrictions, achievement, and independence. With this equation it was possible to predict 50% of the variance in girls' n Aff scores. Most of these variables are the same ones that led to high n Ach, a result consistent with the finding of a significant positive correlation (+.446, $p < .05$) between n Ach and n Aff for girls. Thus there is a strong tendency for girls who are high on n Ach to also be high on n Aff. The picture of the mother of a high n Aff daughter is one of a mother actively involved, actively verbally helping, but showing little tendency to simply express interest or to try to elicit performance from her daughter. Like the mother of a high n Ach daughter the mother of a high n Aff daughter made demands for independent behaviour early and is now allowing her daughter to be independent. She does, however, still encourage achievement and expect her daughter to meet the restrictions that are set.

This pattern of both helping and setting expectations provides the child with a challenge while offering the support which may well be needed for continued effort. Further, the mother's support or continued willingness to help her daughter may provide an affiliative

situation from which the daughter will develop her orientation toward other affiliative situations. Teaching the child independent behaviour at early ages and then allowing her to exercise that independence is important for the development of n Ach. The child needs to be free to test out her competence, take risks and be evaluated before developing a stable orientation toward achievement situations.

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Footnotes

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